June 26, 2008

Public Notice for Water Quality Certification and/or Waste Discharge Requirements (Dredge/Fill Projects)

US ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS
WARM SPRINGS DAM/LAKE SONOMA
OUTLET CHANNEL EROSION REPAIR PROJECT
WDID No. 1B08104WNSO

Sonoma County

On April 24, 2008, Ms. Allison Bremner, of the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) (Applicant), filed an application for water quality certification under section 401 of the Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. § 1341) with the California Regional Water Quality Control Board, North Coast Region (Regional Water Board) for activities associated with the Warm Springs Dam/Lake Sonoma Outlet Channel Erosion Repair Project (Project).

Information describing the proposed project was noticed for public comment on the Regional Water Board's website on June 26, 2008. Under Title 23, California Code of Regulations, Section 3858(a): "The executive director or the executive officer with whom an application for certification is filed shall provide public notice of an application at least twenty-one (21) days before taking certification action on the application, unless the public notice requirement has been adequately satisfied by the applicant or federal agency. If the applicant or federal agency provides public notice, it shall be in a manner and to an extent fully equivalent to that normally provided by the certifying agency. If an emergency requires that certification be issued in less than 21 days, public notice shall be provided as much in advance of issuance as possible, but no later than simultaneously with issuance of certification." Due to the nature of emergency associated with this project due to the possibility of damage to Dry Creek Road, and/or the spillway structure, this 401 Water Quality Certification will be issued during the 21-day public comment period. Public comments will still be accepted and reviewed during the entire 21-day comment period.

The job site is located at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' (Corps) Warm Springs Dam/Lake Sonoma Project. The Federally-owned project is located approximately 14 miles northwest of Healdsburg, California and is accessible via Dry Creek Road and Skaggs Springs Road.

The 319-foot earth fill dam was constructed in 1983 on Dry Creek (a major tributary to the Russian River) at it's confluence with Warm Springs Creek, which created Lake Sonoma. The project included a spillway, a downstream outlet, a recreational facility, a fish hatchery, and channel improvements downstream. The dam's main purposes are to provide flood protection, store water for irrigation and municipalities, and to create the lake for recreation.

The project area is surrounded with open fields and developed land for hatchery structures. The contractor would be working below the dam and within the project's outlet channel (Dry Creek) at three specific sites (A, B, C). The overall size of the project area is approximately 7,100 square feet (sq. ft.). The current channel contains rip rap and vegetation; a lot of the stream bank material has eroded away.

There are no other projects being implemented or planned that are related to the proposed project, or that may impact the water body at this time.

Work would predominantly include the placement of approximately 1,800 tons, or 1,050 cubic yards (c.y.), of 27" riprap at two different sites along portions of the channel slope and invert. Work would also include the placement of approximately 130 tons (70 c.y.)

of 18-inch riprap and 50 tons (53 c.y.) of quarry spoils (6-inch minus) at a third site along the channel slope.

The overall size of the project area is approximately 7,100 sq. feet. Site A is approximately 25'x 60' (1,500 sq. ft.) and located immediately below the concrete apron to the stream gauging station. Site B is approximately 20'x 250' (5000 sq. ft.) and extends about 250 feet downstream from Site A, along the right (viewed downstream) channel slope. Site C is approximately 20'x 30' (600 sq. ft.) and is immediately downstream of Site A, on the left channel side as viewed downstream.

Work is prohibited during the spawning steelhead trout run, which can begin as early as mid-October and typically ends in mid-May of the following year. Accordingly, the Contractor shall not be allowed to begin placement of riprap before May 20th and shall be required to complete all work no later than October 15th. Stream flows are regulated by the USACE and should be in the order of 120 cubic feet per second (cfs) during construction.

Washing of Riprap. The Contractor shall wash down riprap to meet turbidity requirements, which are described in the next paragraph. The Contractor shall use unpolluted clean water to remove any dirt and fine material prior to placement. Wastewater shall not be allowed to discharge into the outlet channel (Dry Creek). Wastewater can be allowed to percolate into the ground, or evaporate. If necessary, the Contractor can use sandbags, or other suitable means, to direct flow and/or provide temporary containment. The Contractor shall restore staging areas and construction traffic areas to their pre-project condition.

Turbidity Monitoring. The Contractor shall take turbidity measurements at least once a day while any riprap is being placed in the water. The Contractor shall record the turbidity in NTU units using an EPA approved turbidity meter. Prior to use, the meter must be calibrated in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. After calibration, a background turbidity measurement shall be taken approximately 50 feet downstream of the construction site. A second turbidity measurement shall then be taken approximately 300 feet downstream of the construction site. Both measurements should be taken approximately 10 feet from the shoreline using a boat. If the second turbidity measurement is more than 10 NTU above the background level, the Contractor shall alter construction to reduce the turbidity level. If the background level is greater than 100 NTU, then the turbidity criteria shall be changed to 10% above background. If the turbidity criteria are exceeded, turbidity measurements must be conducted every 2 hours until there are three consecutive measurements that are below the criteria. Afterwards, the frequency may be returned to a once a day measurement. All measurements shall be recorded in a daily logbook and the logbook, or a copy of the logbook, given to the on-site USACE representative after project completion. If there is a turbidity exceedance, the logbook should contain observation notes on the reasons for the exceedance.

The Contractor shall be advised not to place equipment in the channel and dump, roll or push riprap to place it. The vertical drop shall be minimized.

Compensatory mitigation for the project is not necessary as the Project is replacing structures that were formerly mitigated for and no new impacts are expected.

At a minimum, the following construction Best Management Practices (BMPs) will be incorporated into the final project plans in order to reduce and control soil erosion: work in and around waterways will be conducted during the dry season; installation of construction barrier fencing to preclude equipment entry into sensitive areas; installation of silt fencing or fiber rolls to prevent sediment loss from immediate work area; topsoil salvage and reapplication; and seeding and mulching.

The Regional Water Board, the lead California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) agency, has determined that this Project qualifies for a Categorical Exemption, 15301 – Existing Facilities, pursuant to CEQA guidelines, and will file a Notice of Exemption with the State Clearinghouse.

As a Federal Agency, an Army Corps permit is not required; however, the Applicant has consulted with NOAA Fisheries Service and will abide by their recommendations for mitigation and enhancements.

The Warm Springs Dam/Lake Sonoma Outlet Channel Erosion Repair Project is scheduled to begin in summer 2008 and end in fall 2008. Staff is proposing to regulate this project pursuant to Section 401 of the Clean Water Act (33 USC 1341) and/or Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act Authority. Under Title 23, California Code of Regulations, Section 3858(a): "The executive director or the executive officer with whom an application for certification is filed shall provide public notice of an application at least twenty-one (21) days before taking certification action on the application, unless the public notice requirement has been adequately satisfied by the applicant or federal agency. If the applicant or federal agency provides public notice, it shall be in a manner and to an extent fully equivalent to that normally provided by the certifying agency. If an emergency requires that certification be issued in less than 21 days, public notice shall be provided as much in advance of issuance as possible, but no later than simultaneously with issuance of certification." Public comments will still be accepted and reviewed during the entire 21-day comment period.

If you have any questions or comments, please contact staff member Stephen Bargsten at (707) 576-2653 or sbargsten@waterboards.ca.gov within 21 days of the posting of this notice.

This is a brief summary of this project; all related documents and comments received are on file and may be inspected or copied at the Regional Water Board office, 5550 Skylane Blvd., Boulevard, Suite A, Santa Rosa, California 95403. Appointments are recommended for document review. Appointments can be made by calling (707) 576-2220.

062608_SKB_Warm_Springs_Dam_Spillway_Protection_PN.doc